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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4578
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RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 4997
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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0241
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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001743

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. China Olympics

Key stories in the media:

The Jerusalem Post reported that a top Israeli defense official has told the daily that if Russia goes through with the sale of its most advanced anti-aircraft missile system to Iran, Israel will use an electronic warfare device now under development to neutralize it and

as a result present Russia as vulnerable to air infiltrations. Media quoted Defense Minister Ehud Barak as saying in an interview with the Italian newspaper Corriere Della Sera that all options for dealing with the Iranian threat were "open and ready." Barak stressed the importance of "strengthening and accelerating economic sanctions against Iran." Media reported that in Beijing today President Shimon Peres met with Chinese President Hu Jintao and stressed to him the "global nature" of Iran's nuclear problem. Media quoted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as saying yesterday in an interview with Yahoo News and Politico that the U.S. would not "say yes or no" to an Israeli military strike on Iran. She also said that Iran's answer to the incentives package offered by world powers Qis not a really serious answerQ, and warned that new economic sanctions were the next likely step if the country continued to refuse to freeze its nuclear program. Iranian Press Attache in Damascus Majeed Bishtistani was quoted as saying in an interview with the Arabic-language Assennara, in response to Israeli and American calls to attack Iran, that if Israel does anything stupid it will endure an unprecedented devastating reaction.

Ha'aretz wrote that U.S. Gen. Keith Dayton "has a daunting task: convincing Palestinians that by organizing their security forces, they can bring statehood closer, and showing Israelis that if they ease restrictions, the Palestinians will be more responsible neighbors."

Several media quoted the British Consulate as saying that a small group of settlers attacked a delegation of British diplomats during a visit to Hebron yesterday. The British diplomats were taking part in a tour by Breaking the Silence (an organization of veteran Israeli soldiers that collects testimonies of soldiers who served in the territories during the Second Intifada).

Israel Radio reported that three Gaza students wrote Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice this week, asking that she rescind the revocation of their student visas to the U.S. One of them wrote that he did not understand the reason for the move. Ha'aretz reported that a Palestinian woman who gave birth to quadruplets at Ashkelon's Barzilai Hospital this week this week cannot have her husband visit her from Khan Yunis (Gaza) -- nor will Israel let her return to him in Gaza

Maariv reported hat the IDF favors the continuation of the truce with Hamas, and that Shin Bet is opposed to it.

The Jerusalem Post quoted a source in the Attorney General's Office as saying that Israel is battling hard to overturn a Spanish court's decision to issue arrest warrants against six current and former politicians and senior military officials.

The Jerusalem Post and Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that a compromise has been reached regarding the unauthorized outpost of Migron: The settler leadership is set to vote on a Defense Ministry proposal to relocate the community, most likely to an undeveloped area of a nearby settlement.

Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday Israel opened a roadblock to trucks on a road near Hebron.

Ha'aretz reported that Israel will hold Lebanon responsible for any attacks against Israel, in particular for any Hizbullah efforts to avenge the death of its military leader Imad Mughniyah. The decision represents a change in Israeli policy, after always firmly separating Hizbullah and the Lebanese government.

All media reported that yesterday Finance Minister Roni Bar-On endorsed FM Tzipi Livni's candidacy for Kadima chairmanship.

Yediot excerpted a new book by former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk, "Innocent Abroad," in which he claims that Israeli-Syrian peace was missed in Shepherdstown in 1999, and that former PM Ehud Barak "played around" with then President Bill Clinton and former Syrian FM Farouk Shara.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel has relayed to Turkey its reservations about Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's scheduled "working visit" to Turkey on Wednesday.

The Jerusalem Post cited an AP report that Hans-Gert Pottering, the head of the European Parliament, said yesterday in Lebanon that the EU is ready to broker Israel-Syria peace talks.

All media highlighted the crash of a civilian light aircraft at Haifa's airport yesterday. The media evoked ongoing concerns of a strike at one of the city's chemical plants.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "It is not the first time that the U.S. has seemed to underestimate some of the potential dangers associated with the entirely admirable effort to enable deserving young Gazans to enjoy the benefits of the Fulbright program."

Block Quotes:

"That Elusive Balance"

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (8/8): "Whether or not [the] fiasco [over the Fulbright students from Gaza] was a consequence of an Israeli failure to communicate the extent of its concerns in an efficient manner, it is not the first time that the U.S. has seemed to underestimate some of the potential dangers associated with the entirely admirable effort to enable deserving young Gazans to enjoy the benefits of the Fulbright program.... But there are two other lessons of the Fulbright saga, and of this week's world-upside-down influx to Israel of terrified, desperate Palestinian gunmen from Gaza. First, that Israel is the sole reliable guarantor of its own security and can only be thoroughly cautious in relinquishing aspects of that role, even as it seeks to empower relative Palestinian moderates. And second, that where at least some Palestinians are concerned, Israel is the best guarantor of their security as well."

2. China Olympics:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Beyond self-interest, 21st-century China has another reason to block the Iranian bomb: Chinese ascendancy on the world stage. With world leadership come responsibilities."

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Fairness is a fundamental principle of the Olympic Games; now the guests from the West need to serve as an example of this."

Block Quotes:

1. "China's Olympic Challenge"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (8/8): "China's relationship with Tehran, its permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and its status as a first-tier world power position Beijing as a key player in international efforts to block Iran from producing nuclear weapons. Conversely, if China joins Russia in helping Iran play for time, it will effectively remove the UN from efforts to solve the crisis via diplomacy.... The people of China deserve to reap the bounty of their country's extraordinary achievements without the unprecedented threat to world stability posed by Iranian fanaticism, hegemony, and bellicosity. Beyond self-interest, 21st-century China has another reason to block the Iranian bomb: Chinese ascendancy on the world stage. With world leadership come responsibilities. President Hu must now summon the courage to define his country's interests within the global

context."

II. "One World, Many Dreams"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (8/8): "China can pride itself on the impressive successes at meeting the targets it set for itself in preparing to host the Games.... However, behind the scenes, China continues to respond with brutal toughness against anyone who disrupts its plans.... The human and global implications of the Games will be known only the day after the Olympics. Will the Olympics of 'One World, One Dream' change the host country? Will the Beijing Olympics of 2008 usher in a new dawn? The answer will be provided by 12,000 athletes and 23,000 journalists from 200 countries, who will report home every day, every hour, about what they saw in Beijing. These observers must not avert their gaze from the regime's possible injustices against freedom of expression and movement. But they should also not fall victim to predetermined political views, and instead remain open to possible surprises. Fairness is a fundamental principle of the Olympic Games; now the guests from the West need to serve as an example of this."

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